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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Better Child Health"--Information from the Agricultural
Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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In his Child Health Day proclamation....President Truman named May first as the day when communities should get together to plan "at least one improvement" in the health care of children. He also pointed out that "the health of American children, like their education, should be accepted as a definite public responsibility."

If you're wondering just where your community might start...here's a tip from Vermont. Why not conduct a nutrition survey? See whether the children of the community are getting the vitamins, minerals and other food nutrients they need for good health and growth. Nutrition is closely related to health...you know. And it's an important part in preventive medicine.

With other interested agencies...the Vermont State Nutrition Committee conducted such a survey in 1944 and 1945. Twenty-three hundred school children..... ranging from three to 19 years of age.....took part. They came from both town and farm homes. To make the survey....the Committee took a record of all foods eaten by each child during one or more days. And they made a blood analysis and physical inspection of each child.

The Vermont Committee found evidence of malnutrition in many of these children.

You've heard malnutrition described as hidden hunger. Malnutrition is not a simple condition. It may be due to a lack of one necessary food element. But more often it's due to not having large enough quantities of several foods. It may be so severe that the person is really sick. Or it may be in a mild form not so easily

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recognized. Its effects can be seen only as constant tiredness or in the poor body development of young people.

Nearly 85 percent of the children in the Vermont survey showed signs of having suffered from rickets at some time in their lives. This showed up in bumpy heads....poorly formed chests...knock knees.

More than a third of the children were not eating the tomatoes, raw salad greens, or citrus fruits needed to keep body tissues firm.

Only half of the youngsters were eating the green and yellow vegetables which are our richest source of vitamin A.

Many of the children were not eating as much protein food--meat and eggs--as they needed for body building.

So the nutritionists made these recommendations to the fathers and mothers of Vermont.

Buy more cod liver oil----not only for the infant----but also for the child whose teeth and bones are developing. Cod liver oil is a good source of vitamin D. It will help prevent rickets.

Serve more green and yellow vegetables in meals. And learn to prepare these vegetables in a variety of ways so the family won't get tired of them.

Grow more tomatoes and cabbage in the home garden. These are inexpensive sources of vitamin C. They can be grown in abundance and put up for winter use.

If you live on a farm...have a poultry flock as well as a pig so the family can have an ample supply of good quality protein foods.

Teach your children to eat and enjoy a variety of foods. This may be done at home. And it may be done at school....through school lunches.

Well....that's the advice the Vermont Nutrition Committee passed along to the parents. As you can see...when the parents know that their children are not getting the right foods for health and growth...it's easier for them to do something about it. And that's how a nutrition survey can help bring better health to the children of the community.

